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“FAIR HARVARD”: IRISH ORIGIN OF THE TUNE

By W. H. GRATTAN FLOOD

IT is now more than eighty-three years since the Rev. Samuel Gilman, of Charleston, S. C., wrote his song of “Fair Harvard” for the “Centennial Celebration” of Harvard University. To be strictly accurate, the Harvard song was written for the 200th anniversary of the founding of Harvard. As is well known, this famous American University was founded in 1636, and after 200 years it was felt that a school song was a desideratum. Hence, for the celebration on September the 8th, 1836, the Rev. Samuel Gilman wrote the song of “Fair Harvard,” which is the recognized or official school-song, just as “Dulce Domum” belongs to Winchester College (England). This song was set to the air associated with “My lodging is on the cold ground,” and it was published in a harmonised form, in music score, by T. Comer, being “entered according to Act of Congress A. D. 1857, by Oliver Ditson and Company, in the clerk’s office of the District Court of Mass.”

Through the extreme courtesy of my friend, Professor G. L. Kittredge, of Harvard, I am enabled to present the readers of *The Musical Quarterly* with a facsimile of the original printed copy of the song from the Programme of the celebration in 1836. Professor Kittredge’s accompanying letter is so interesting that I reproduce it:—

8 Hilliard Street,
CAMBRIDGE.
January 16, 1917.

Dear Dr. Grattan Flood:—

Harvard University was founded in 1636. In 1836 it celebrated its 200th anniversary. “Fair Harvard” was written for that celebration. It is the recognised Harvard song, sung on all festal occasions. I enclose a facsimile of the printed official Programme of 1836, which I have had made for you from a copy preserved in our library. The song was written in a house in Cambridge now known as Fay House, and now belonging to Radcliffe College—the Women’s College affiliated with Harvard University.

Yours faithfully,
G. L. Kittredge.

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ORDER OF SERVICES

AT THE

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

OF

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,

ON THE 8TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1836.

PRAYER.

By the Rev. EZRA RIPLEY, D. D., of Concord.

ODE,

By the Rev. SAMUEL GILMAN, of Charleston, S. C.

FAIR HARVARD ! thy sons to thy Jubilee throng,
 And with blessings surrender thee o'er,
 By these festival-rites, from the Age that is past,
 To the Age that is waiting before.
 O Relic and 'Type of our ancestors' worth,
 That hast long kept their memory warm !
 First flower of their wilderness ! Star of their night,
Calm rising through change and through storm!

To thy bowers we were led in the bloom of our youth,
 From the home of our free-roving years,
 When our fathers had warned, and our mothers had prayed
 And our sisters had blest, through their tears.
 Thou then wert our Parent, — the nurse of our souls, —
 We were moulded to manhood by thee,
 Till, freighted with treasure-thoughts, friendships, and hopes,
 Thou didst launch us on Destiny's sea.

When, as pilgrims, we come to revisit thy halls,
 To what kindlings the season gives birth !
 Thy shades are more soothing, thy sunlight more dear,
 Than descend on less privileged earth :
 For the Good and the Great, in their beautiful prime,
 Through thy precincts have musingly trod,
 As they girded their spirits, or deepened the streams
 'That make glad the fair City of God.'

Farewell ! be thy destinies onward and bright !
 To thy children the lesson still give,
 With freedom to think, and with patience to bear,
 And for Right ever bravely to live.
 Let not moss-covered Error moor *thee* at its side,
 As the world on Truth's current glides by ;
 Be the herald of Light, and the bearer of Love,
 Till the stock of the Puritans die.

DISCOURSE,

By the PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

PRAYER,

By the Rev. JONATHAN HOMER, D. D., of Newton.

DOXOLOGY.

FROM all that dwell below the skies,
 Let the Creator's praise arise ;
 Let the Redeemer's name be sung
 Through every land, by every tongue.

Eternal are thy mercies, Lord ;
 Eternal truth attends thy word :
 Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,
 Till suns shall rise and set no more

BENEDICTION.

This preamble sufficiently sets forth the *raison d'être* of the song which is perfectly familiar to three generations of Harvard students. However, it may be well to give a very brief notice of the Rev. Samuel Gilman.

Samuel Gilman was born at Gloucester, Mass., on February 16, 1791, and graduated at Harvard in 1811. From 1817 to 1819 he was a tutor in his old University, but in the latter year he accepted a call to the pastorate of the Unitarian Congregation at Charleston, South Carolina, and, in the same year, married Carolina Howard, also of poetic fame. He remained as Pastor of Charleston till his death, at Kingston, Mass., on February 9, 1858. Many of his hymns have become popular in Unitarian and Nonconformist Churches, especially his "O God, accept the sacred hour," "We sing thy mercy, God of love" and "Yes, to that last command."

And now for the source of the tune to which "Fair Harvard" was set. This tune is none other than the old Irish air familiar to most concert-goers in Tom Moore's setting of his delightful lyric, "Believe me, if all these endearing young charms," published in 1810.

English writers, following the lead of Chappell, claim the air as "English," on the strength of its appearance in *Vocal Music, or the Songster's Companion*, in 1775. Chappell's authority has misled many subsequent "tune-ologists"; and I regret to add that even Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, who ought to have known better, has tamely followed this English writer.

In *Vocal Music* (1775) the tune appears as set to "My lodging it is on the cold ground," a song originally written by Sir William Davenant, and sung by Moll Davies in *The Rivals*, in 1668. The air in this scarce collection is not the original air composed by Matthew Locke, in 1665, but the Irish air variously known as "As fada annso me" (Long am I here) and "The Gentle Maiden," as heard by Bunting from the old Irish harpers, and which was known to some of them as far back as 1745.

Locke's air held the field from 1665 to 1770, and it then was replaced by the Irish air to which the song of "My lodging it is on the cold ground," has ever since been sung. For the purpose of comparison, I herewith subjoin Locke's air of 1665, and the Irish air of 1770. The older air is now only to be found in antiquarian collections, while the latter air especially as adapted by Tom Moore to his lyric "Believe me, if all these endearing young charms," in 1810, and as linked to "Fair Harvard," in 1836, enjoys a considerable vogue.

1. My lodg-ing it is on the cold ground

Composed by Matthew Locke, 1685

My lodg-ing it is on the cold ground, And oh! ver-y hard is my
fare— But that which troub-les me most is The un-kind-ness of my
dear, Yet still— I cry, O turn love, And prith-ee love turn to me— For
thou art the man that I long for And a-lack what re-me-dy—

2. My lodg-ing it is on the cold ground

Vocal Music. 1775

My lodg-ing it is on the cold— ground, etc.

It will be seen at once that Locke's air is quite different from the Irish air which has supplanted it. Therefore, the point at issue is as to the source of the air published in *Vocal Music*, in 1775. Chappell and his copyists claim the air as "English," but I back up Bunting and Tom Moore as to its Irish provenance.

To begin with, although *Vocal Music* is fairly accessible, yet it is not to be regarded as the earliest printed source of the air. Thomas Carter, of Dublin (1734–1804), the composer of "O Nanny wilt thou go with me," "The Carillons of Dunkirk," etc., published the Irish air in 1773, two years prior to the appearance of *Vocal Music*. No doubt, he had been familiar with the air in Dublin since the year 1760. Another composer, Tommaso Giordani, who heard the air in Dublin, in the years 1764–1771, published an arrangement of it in 1776. Even Tom Moore's memory

of the tune must have gone back to 1770—certainly before the year 1775.

Chappell was evidently unacquainted with Carter's setting of 1773, and he rather disingenuously endeavours to discount the Irish association of the tune with Giordani's arrangement of 1776, by observing that "Giordani went to Dublin in 1779." This statement may have been made in good faith, yet there is abundant evidence that Giordani went to Dublin in 1764, and spent seven years in the Irish capital, until 1771, but returned from London in 1779, and remained in Dublin until his death in 1806. Thus Giordani must have been familiar with the Irish air, long before its appearance in *Vocal Music*; and it so impressed him that he introduced it as the Larghetto movement of his Third Concerto for the Harpsichord (op. 14), which was published in 1776. A third version of the air was published by Aird of Glasgow—merely the melody, without any indication of its source—in 1778.

3. My lodging is on the cold ground

Aird's Selection, 1778



But it may be urged that though the air was arranged by Carter and by Giordani, there is no definite proof as to its being Irish. In fact, Chappell says that Tom Moore was the first to claim it as Irish, in 1810. Fortunately, a protracted search among dusty files of old Dublin newspapers reveals the interesting fact that in September, 1778, was advertised: "My lodging it is on the cold ground," the said publication being described as: "A favourite IRISH song as sung by Signor Rauzzini." I also discovered that Signor Rauzzini sang at the Rotunda in Dublin, from May to September, 1778, and gave lessons to young Michael Kelly, subsequently selected by Mozart for the parts of Basilio and Don Curzio at the inaugural performance of *Le Nozze di Figaro* (May 1, 1786). But, more important still, I recently secured a copy of this rare half-sheet song, issued by Anne Lee, the widow of Samuel Lee, of No. 2 Dame Street, Dublin. However, save for the imprint and the statement as to the Irish origin of the melody, the music

is the self-same as in Carter, in *Vocal Music* and in Giordani, previously described.

4. My lodging is on the cold ground

A favourite Irish Song

Anne Lee. 1778



Five years later, in 1783, the Irish air was published in a Dublin musical periodical, Walker's *Hibernian Magazine* (October 1783), and was headed "The Irish Mad Song." This setting is the same as that published by Anne Lee, and by an Irish firm in London¹—Katherine Fentum, in 1781—as a sheet song, entitled "MY LODGING, a favourite Mad Song." Walker's title adds: "As sung by Signior Rauzini [*sic*] at the Rotunda." Not long afterwards, in 1785, John Hill of No. 8 Mary Street, Dublin, issued "My lodging is on the cold ground": A favourite IRISH air as sung by Signor Rauzzini." This same version appears in Thompson's *Hibernian Muse* headed: "The Irish Mad Song," in 1788. It is of additional interest to note that it was from the *Hibernian Muse* Tom Moore took his version of the Irish air.

Thus, in addition to Carter's (1773), Giordani's (1776), and Aird's (1778) versions of the air, all of which give the melody only, we have five song settings of the air in Irish collections, and described as "Irish," between the years 1778 and 1788; that is, the song and air as published by Anne Lee (1778), Fentum (1781), Walker (1783), Hill (1785), and the *Hibernian Muse* (1788). To these may be added a version of the melody in O'Farrell's *Pocket Companion for the Irish or Union Pipes* (Vol. I. p. 74), issued in 1805.

Of late years some Scotch writers have claimed the tune for Scotland, in as much as it was adapted to a song: "I loe na laddie but ane," which is published in the *Scots Musical Museum*

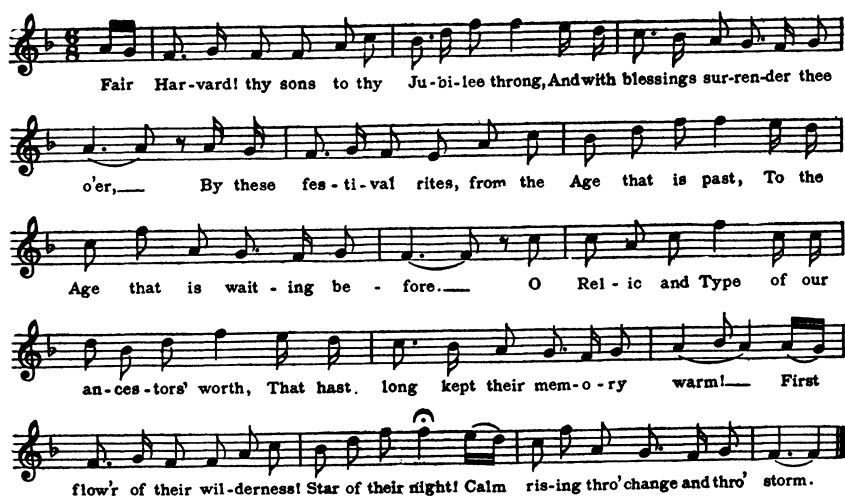
¹Mr. Frank Kidson, in his *British Music Publishers* (1900), says that "probably the Fentum family came from Ireland."

(1787-1804). However, this claim may be at once dismissed, as the Scotch song (by MacNeill) was not published till 1779, and was adapted to the Irish air of "My lodging is on the cold ground," which had already appeared in Aird's Collection in 1778. Moreover, Stenhouse candidly admits the Irish origin of the air; while Robert Archibald Smith includes it as Irish in his *Irish Minstrel*, in 1825. Even George F. Graham (1789-1867), one of the most cautious of Scotch musicologists, in his historical notes (1849), says that the melody of "I loe na a laddie but ane" is a "mere modification of the *Irish* tune called 'My lodging is on the cold ground'." More recently still, Mr. Alfred Moffat, a distinguished Scotch musician, includes the air in his *Minstrelsy of Ireland* (1897).

To sum up, the evidence for the Irish origin of the tune of "Fair Harvard," (which I give as No. 5) is overwhelming, and can no longer be in question. The great weight attached to Chappell's

5. Fair Harvard

1836



Fair Har-vard! thy sons to thy Ju-bi-lee throng, And with blessings sur-ren-der thee
o'er, By these fes-ti-val rites, from the Age that is past, To the
Age that is wait-ing be-fore. O Rel-ic and Type of our
an-ces-tors' worth, That hast. long kept their mem-o-ry warm! First
flow'r of their wil-derness! Star of their night! Calm ris-ing thro' change and thro' storm.

name has been a pitfall for writers during the past 50 to 60 years, and, as a matter of fact, quite a number of his so-called "English" airs are now incontestably proved to be Irish, *e. g.*, "The Girl I left behind me," "The Dandy O," "Ally Croker," etc. Let it be hoped, then, that the present investigation as to the Irish source of the tune of "Fair Harvard" will emphasise the need for verifying Chappell's statements, and will help to clear away the mists that have for so long circled around the provenance of this charming Irish melody.